

**SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
(PUBLIC HEARING)**

February 10, 2003

6:00 PM

Mayor Baines called the meeting to order.

Mayor Baines called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Alderman Smith.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Gatsas, Guinta, Sysyn, Osborne, Pinard, Lopez, Shea, DeVries, Garrity, Smith and Forest

Absent: Aldermen Wihby, O'Neil and Thibault

Mayor Baines stated before I begin the meeting I just want to make a public announcement that on Thursday at 3 PM at the Expo Center at the Holiday Inn in downtown Manchester we are going to be having a send off for about 200 troops who will be leaving our area to serve our country. We are expecting a very large turnout and we invite members of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen to be in attendance and anybody in the community who would like to attend. Also, the American Legion is helping us respond to this event and the Center of New Hampshire with their generosity is providing the facility but we need to raise some money to help with refreshments for the families and the soldiers who will be attending. If people wish to make a contribution they can make it payable to the American Legion and send the checks to the Mayor's Office at One City Hall Plaza and we will put it in the hands of the local legion posts that are helping with this very special send off of these brave young men and women. That will be on Thursday at 3 PM and I believe from 3 PM to 4 PM there will be a ceremony followed by a reception at approximately 4 PM. We would appreciate your participation.

Mayor Baines advised that the purpose of the special meeting is to hear those wishing to comment on a proposed highway project in the City of Manchester; that the Public Works Director and representatives of CLD Consulting Engineers shall be requested to make a presentation following which those wishing to comment will be heard; that anyone wishing to speak must first step to the nearest microphone when recognized and recite his/her name and address in a clear, loud voice for the record; that each person will be given only one opportunity to speak and any questions must be directed to the Chair.

Mayor Baines requested that Frank Thomas, Public Works Director, make a presentation.

Mr. Thomas stated I am the Director of Public Works for the City of Manchester. This is a public hearing for the Granite Street reconstruction and widening project located in Manchester between Main Street to the West and Elm Street to the East and also Lake Avenue from Elm Street to Chestnut Street. The notice of hearing was advertised in *The Union Leader* on January 10, 2003 and certified mailings were mailed to the abutters on that same date. As a result of Federal funds being utilized on this project, the hearing is being held in accordance with RSA 231 for the layout of a Class IV highway. This hearing is being recorded so that an official written record will be developed. This official record will also include written comments that will be accepted for a period of 10 days following this hearing. Once the official record is completed, the Board of Mayor and Aldermen acting as the Committee will consider all testimony and then vote on the necessity of the project with the vote to hopefully continue. I am extremely pleased to be part of this presentation on what I feel is one of the most significant transportation improvement projects for the City of Manchester. The Granite Street project was initiated by the City in 2003 in response to the NH Department of Transportation plan to reconstruct the Interchange at Exit 5, the Granite Street Interchange and to turn it into a full access Interchange. As a result of these two projects, Granite Street will become the gateway to the City of Manchester. Drawing off of the benefits of a full Interchange with I-293, Granite Street will not only continue to be a main City East-West arterial connector, but will provide better access between the downtown, the Millyard area, City recreational facilities, established residential community and the Interstate system. The Granite Street project is vital to the continued growth and vitality of the downtown, the Millyard and the City of Manchester as a whole. This project is consistent with the efforts envisioned of the City's Planning Department. We have worked together on the shared goal for the City and have the full support of the Mayor's Office, the Chamber of Commerce, our Congressional delegation, the Executive Council and officials of the NH Department of Transportation. The presentation tonight will last approximately 45 minutes. Upon conclusion of the formal presentation, there will be a question and answer period and an opportunity to hear public comments. As mentioned by the Mayor, if someone during this question and answer or public comment period wishes to speak we ask that they step up to a microphone and give their full name and address in order that the record that will be generated from tonight's meeting is accurate and correct. Without wasting any other time, at this time I would like to turn it over to Tom Sommers. Tom is a representative of the consulting firm of CLD that is the City consultant working on this project.

Mr. Tom Sommers stated first of all before I get into my brief remarks and then I will be turning it over to the manager of the project, I would like to introduce the team and I would ask that those people raise their hands so that you can see who they are. First of all from CLD, Paul Konieczka who is also an owner/partner in the firm is our traffic expert; Jamie Paine is our environmental specialist; Rich Rooney who is here is our bridge specialist,

Dorna Hamer is our project engineer and she is also working the overhead today and Roch Larochelle who will do the majority of the detail presentation after I am through with this introduction is here. Also with respect to the project from part of our acquisition team is Peter Rotch of the McLane law firm. Also we have the landscape architect from LDR, Hank Alinger. Representing the NH DOT, who we are coordinating with, are Keith Cota, their project manager for the Exit 5 project and Bob Landry with the DOT. Also here from Senator Gregg's Office and of course we all know that is where a substantial amount of the funds are coming from for this to work is Rich Lougee. Granite Street is another step in the economic revitalization of downtown. The slide that you see up in front of you is a slide that I obtained from Bob MacKenzie and it was a slide that he put together to show all of the projects, which are either ongoing or being thought of in the future. Just to hit on a few of them there is the common district, which is an opportunity which the Planning Department would like to see developed. The Gaslight District, which you have heard of. The Warehouse District. Also, there is the South Commercial Street area, which is being developed privately in this area and of course we don't know all of the facts with respect to the baseball stadium and as we understand it resulting development surrounding the Singer Park area. The Riverwalk, which has been constructed in basically this general area and South and also the Piscataquog bike way to the West and someday a Riverwalk hopefully with an esplanade along the entire riverfront. Hands Across the Merrimack is located in this area which is another exciting pedestrian project presently going through a private fundraising initiative. Also, we are aware that there are private redevelopment thoughts on the West Side with respect to residential/retail/commercial I guess. I don't know all of the details of it. The point we are making is that this is Granite Street and Granite Street is kind of the connector of these projects and also the projects which have already occurred – the Verizon Wireless Arena, the Elm Street redevelopment with all of the projects that have gone on there and of course the Millyard area. This, therefore, is a very major part of the redevelopment. For the first time we are going to have full access with the Exit 5 project and this project is obviously to be coordinated with that. We are adding lanes. By putting the single point diamond on the Exit 5 area we are increasing capacity quite substantially for vehicles. By putting in a coordinate signal system we should substantially reduce the issues with respect to traffic congestion on Granite Street and the on/off ramps at Exit 5. I remember when we first showed the first plan to the Mayor or to Frank Thomas and the Mayor and the Mayor said this better not look like another project that was just completed and he pointed to Bridge Street and it is not going to. What I am talking about and you are going to see in some detail tonight that this is to create a true image, a gateway image, in terms of the landscaping, in terms of pedestrian and bike access and in terms of all of the elements that go beyond just vehicular access. This is in my opinion more than just a vehicle connection. This is truly an image builder for the downtown of Manchester. Before I introduce Roch, let me just give you some idea of the group that has been doing the design on this. It is being led by CLD and we are coordinating closely with the NH DOT. As I noted, Hank Alinger is here from LDR International and will be doing some of the presentation with Roch. He is our landscape architect. They also worked with us on the

Riverwalk Master Plan and portions of the Riverwalk, which are constructed. Gordon, Bua & Read, Inc. are our specialists. We have railroad issues and upgrades to do and they are specialists in that area. Haley and Aldrich, Inc. are our geo-technical environmental specialists. They are located here in the City. C&M Engineering are our electrical designers. They again are located here. The McLane law firm is located here. Lisa Mausolf is our historical services expert. Victoria Bunker, Inc. is our archeological services expert and RG Bramley & Co., Inc. is our assessment service expert with respect to right-of-way and negotiations with people who may be affected by the widening of this project. Having said that, I am going to hand the microphone over to Roch Larochelle. He is the project manager on this project and he will go through all of the details, which we by the way must go through in order for this to be an official public hearing under the guidelines and requirements where Federal money is involved.

Mr. Roch Larochelle used Powerpoint to make the presentation. He stated this is a very important project for the City. Tom really set the stage here for what we have been working on now for almost three years. The project originally came to be in August of 2000 following the public hearing that was held for the State's Exit 5 project. Following that hearing, the City made a decision that it needed to address certain access issues that resulted from the State upgrading that facility to deal with the traffic in the area. The survey then started after we came under contract with the City in the summer of 2000. After that, an initial bridge study was conducted in February 2001. The bridge study was needed to access the existing conditions of the structure to see exactly what we might be able to do to that structure to upgrade it to fit in with the plans of the roadway. Preliminary plans were subsequently submitted in February of 2002 to the City and the State after which comments were collected from all of the agencies and put into the plans that we currently have to date. That brings us up to the public hearing, which is tonight. A little bit of overview for the project. For the State project for some of you who might not understand how the two fit together...the two projects fit together very tightly so there needs to be a tremendous amount of coordination between the State officials and the City officials to make sure that all of the goals and objectives are met. As you can see here, Exit 5 is here and the City's Granite Street project flows here between South Main Street and Elm Street. To the North is Exit 6, the Amoskeag Interchange and to the South is Exit 4. The notion of improved access to this intersection right here, to this Interchange, is very important when you consider that both Northbound on and Southbound off access are going to be provided because of the location of that Interchange. It is very central to the Central Business District in the City so adding those components of the Interchange to that will help to alleviate some of the congestion that is currently being recognized at Exits 4 and 6. Currently the DOT is scheduled to replace the bridge. This is a red listed bridge, the bridge over Granite Street, the 293 bridge. Currently the schedule for reconstruction of that bridge moving through the process and the whole Interstate project because it is the Interstate project that is going to reconstruct the portion of the Interstate here, is going to go to construction in 2004. That project is being funded with turnpike funds through the State. As an overview of the City's project, this is essentially

what it looks like. You can see the Interstate here runs North-South. Granite Street will run from South Main Street to Elm and then continue Easterly along Lake Avenue up to Chestnut Street. The scope of the work is going to include widening of Granite Street to handle the projected traffic volumes over the next 20 years and to fully implement what is going to happen here at the State's Exit 5 Interchange. The work is going to include signal upgrades and streetscape amenities, wide sidewalks and shoulders to allow for increased mobility, grass esplanades, street trees and ornaments of lighting. One major component of the project is the upgrade to the railroad facility here between Canal and Bedford Streets. It became important early on that that crossing needed to be upgraded and there is also some significant safety equipment that has to be replaced or repaired through this area so it can be brought up to today's standards. Traffic for the corridor...in 2000 traffic data was collected and it was shown that 29,000 vehicles per day pass through the Granite Street corridor. That is project in 20 years from now in 2020 to be average annual daily traffic of 37,000 vehicles per day. Just a quick view of the existing conditions of the roadway. You will see some quick photos here. Some prominent features within the corridor include the Exxon station, Cumberland Farms, which is now M&H Mart and the Dunkin Donuts here on the corner of South Main Street. Here are some other views looking towards the intersection just to get you a flavor of what the corridor looks like today. That is looking West towards the bridge that is going to be replaced and you can see the existing bridge and the aluminum rail here. A few more views looking East up towards the Center of New Hampshire. The historical mill building here. The railroad crossing here, which is to be upgraded and here are some other views of the Center of New Hampshire. Now what we want to do is walk you through the project from West to East. This is one of the first maps that was developed for the project as Tom was talking about early on. What we are going to do is we are going to walk through the project and break it out into five segment areas so we can show you a little bit of detail about what is going on in this area. What this map does is it provides you a very good overview of what is going on through the entire area, including the Exit 5 Interchange and reconstruction here along the river, as well as certain features within the area – the Center of New Hampshire here, the public bus station here, Gateway Park and the civic center here. Before we get into some of the details, I want to talk about some of the colors. As you walk around and look at some of the plans out in the back they are very colorful. Somebody commented that it looked like Christmastime when they walked in. Just a bit of an explanation. The yellow, what that basically does is outlines areas of new pavement. You will see a legend over here on the side. That same legend you will find on the plan back there and the colors correspond. You can look at those a little bit more in detail when you stand back there but in general yellow is new pavement, green is grass islands or esplanades or slope work, purple is new sidewalk, brown is shoulders that flank the travelway either way and red is existing buildings. You will also notice there are some portions that have red hatching through the buildings. Those are buildings to be removed. They are proposed to be removed. Now a little bit more specific as you walk from West to East on the project. This is the first area, Area 1. Starting at South Main Street, the intersection here, the Dunkin Donuts that we saw in the pictures sits right here. You will note the Exxon station is here.

The Cumberland Farms station is currently here and Second Street over here. The first part of what we had to do is establish controls for the Highway to sit what we could fit in in that area without causing major impacts. The first set of controls that we looked at included the historical buildings. There are a pair of historical buildings on this side, as well as the Exit 5 Interchange, which became one of our controls so considering those controls and considering what needed to be put in to handle the traffic volumes through that area what it did was it forced the entire roadway to be pushed to the North so much of the widening was to the North and you can see the existing curb line is over here. You can see it on the drawing. The relative impact resulting from the work that had to be done were these two buildings here, these two properties. As it stands right now the Exxon station we are looking at for a partial acquisition to be able to build the project and the Cumberland Farms, which is the smaller lot, is scheduled for total acquisition. We have spoken to those individuals and we are continuing to speak to those individuals about what is going to be needed for the project. Some of the features in this area – a former bus stop is being proposed here. Currently today buses stop in the middle of the travel lane in front of this apartment complex here. What we are looking to do is have a pull off lane so the buses can pull off, load and then move along without impeding any of the traffic flow. Another feature that is going to be taken through the entire corridor of the project is going to be ornamental lighting and street trees along the sides of the road and in the grass esplanade. Another important feature of this area is the reconstruction of the City parking lot here. As a result of the widening there portions of the City parking lots that currently are used by West High during school hours for parking and what we needed to do was reconfigure those so that we could get back as many parking spaces as possible and rebuild them. The next area that we are going to talk about is primarily the Exit 5 Interchange and the bridge across the river. Now we are going to come back a little bit later and talk a little bit about the bridge across the river. We have some details to talk about there so I am not going to spend a lot of time on that but the Interchange area we will talk about the controls a little bit the same as we did on the previous slide. The Exit 5 Interchange was a major control because we had to coordinate directly with the State to make sure that this project blended in with what the State was proposing for their project and also this building over here is of historic significance, again forcing the roadway to be widened to the North and that really set the stage for the entire project as we go from West to East. The features of this plan, this area, the Exit 5 Interchange as the State has been digging through their design process with the configuration is going to be able to handle a lot more traffic than it does today as well as provide a Northbound on and a Southbound off access that is currently does not have. The other important feature that goes with all of this, of course, is the widening of the Granite Street Bridge. You have the existing bridge basically over here and we are going to widen it by three lanes to the North. It is going to be widened from four to seven lanes. One other important feature of this plan is that there will be future Riverwalk connections provided. As you know or as you may know, the Riverwalk is being planned along the eastern banks of the river down here and what we are trying to do is accommodate that for future connections so that access can be granted down to the Riverwalk. One important part of this plan will be a set of stairs that will come down off of

Granite Street, go down into Jillians' Plaza where there currently...there are steps that go down there today and a plaza down there today that is not used very heavily and then the Jillians' deck down there so there will be access provided at this point here. In the future there will be the ability for a portion of the bridge and rail to be removed and a future access point provided down at the Riverwalk on that edge as well. Area 3 heading up towards Commercial Street and Canal Street...again the controls in this area were dictated by the historic buildings here, the railroad crossing here and some parks that were constructed using Federal funds. You have the Gateway Park here and Loeb Plaza here. I talked a little bit about Loeb Plaza already. Adjacent to Loeb Plaza is an existing City parking lot here, which primarily serves Jillians as well as some of the office buildings over here to the north along Philippe Cote Avenue. As a result of the widening into the park area adjacent to Jillians there is going to be a need to rebuild this parking lot here. That was one of the impacts that was identified early on. One of the other impacts is the Loeb Plaza and Gateway Park here and here. We have been in communication with the resource agencies to talk about that. We will talk a little bit more about that after when we get into some of the environmental considerations. Some of the features of this specific area...again the Riverwalk connections both North and South, as well as if you look at the parking lot here the way that we are going to regain some of the parking spaces is to put all of that parking on a single level. If you know it today you know that it steps up a couple of different levels. The current plan is to take all of that down to one level to regain some of that space and be able to put back some of the parking that is going to be impacted in that area. Access down to that parking lot will be granted through a set of steps here at the corner, which will go down to the parking lot and allow for full mobility around that parking area, as well as a connection point to Jillians and to the Riverwalk down in this area here. Because of the grade differences between Granite Street and the Jillians park area, there was a need for retaining walls all along here so the current proposal is to build retaining walls on these three corners. We talked a little bit about the railroad crossing. This is the railroad crossing that is scheduled to be upgraded. We have had a fair amount of coordination with Boston & Maine and Gilford Transportation and what the scope of that work is going to be and how those facilities are going to get upgraded to allow for safety. Again, the planted medians in the middle. It is proposed that the street be lined with trees and the medians will be planted to allow for some of that gateway concept that Tom was talking about earlier. An important aspect of the project both from West to East is going to be continued pedestrian access all the way through on both sides of the road. Again, the purple highlights those sidewalks. Again, ornamental lighting will also continue up through the corridor. As we head up towards Elm Street, again the primary controls in this area were the match to Elm Street at this intersection, the Center of New Hampshire as a primary concern and the bus station that sits here on the corner. Again, that set the stage for really what we could fit in this area and still get the traffic to move within the footprint of the roadway. You will see a fair amount of work being done in the area of the Fleet Bank. We have had a fair amount of coordination with them to work with them to build something that fits in with the whole gateway concept of the area. They are working independently with their engineers to work with a construction and a concept plan

that will blend in with the overall concept of the roadway widening. Another important feature of this area is going to be the reconstruction of Old Granite Street. If you know the area then you know that a lot of these buildings are...there is a lot of potential there and there has been a lot of discussion about potential redevelopment of this area as part of the Gaslight District upgrade that is included in what Bob MacKenzie is looking at for ultimate planning. This is being done to sort of spur that along. What it is going to involve is a reconstruction of the sidewalks in this area, inclusion of pedestrian bump outs and planting of street trees in that area to soften it up a little bit and again the construction of concrete sidewalks. Again, up through the corridor ornamental lighting. The other part of Old Granite Street is going to be the inclusion of or what we are going to do is maintain the existing parallel parking that is there today. Now heading up towards the Eastern end of the project – Lake Avenue, the civic center here and again the primary control here were the buildings to the North and really from Elm Street on we were looking to match back to the existing conditions of Chestnut Street. The result was that there really were no impacts to the properties along the North side or the civic center and it is really just blending in to the existing conditions. We will be reconstructing the sidewalks along the North face as well as one of the recommendations that came out of a meeting with the Planning Department was to provide a mid block crossing here, which would involve taking a portion of the current limo lane there that is primarily used for standing for ticket purchases. Now to focus back a little bit on the bridge aspect, that is primarily the roadway stuff that we talked about and now we are going to talk a little bit about the bridge and go into a little bit more detail about what is being proposed for the City bridge as well as the State bridge. This we thought was interesting. It just gives you a little bit of perspective and a little bit of history on what has happened to the Granite Street Bridge over the years prior to 1896 and then after the flood that took that bridge and how it was reconstructed in 1900 and as it is today as it was built in 1980. This is how it is today. The current conditions are that you have two lanes in each direction, 7' sidewalks and weathering steel girders as you can see here with the aluminum bridge rail, three river piers and a four span structure. Taking that back to the plan you can see...this was a schematic that was developed in conjunction with LDR, our streetscape consultant. This will show you the overall view of both the Interchange and the City bridge and how that is going to blend in together. Now we will talk a little bit more about some of the components of the City bridge and State bridge but the overall features of the City bridge include deck replacement and the widening of the bridge from four lanes to seven. What you are going to see in a little bit more detail again is the inclusion of an ornamental bridge rail that is being proposed as well as some ornamental lighting to be placed on the structure, some of the components of the Riverwalk access and wider sidewalks – 12' sidewalks are being proposed on the structure.

Mr. Hank Alinger stated this slide starts to give you a feeling for the landscape approach that we are trying to focus on throughout the whole corridor. We have functional aspects of the corridor in terms of access enhancements that are very important but it is also equally important to think about gateway access and how it can improve the whole corridor from an

image standpoint. So we are going to talk about landscape treatments, we will talk about the continuity of sidewalks and pedestrian access and then we will talk about some of the special features, including the bridge treatment and this area beneath the Interstate treatment where we have given some special attention to that which you will see in just a second as well as the overall landscape. The next slide starts to give you a feeling...the upper image shows the cross section in terms of how the new bridge will function in terms of the number of lanes, turning movements and so forth. That happens to be looking West just to give you a feeling to that with 12' wide sidewalks on both sides for pedestrians, the new ornamental railing...the lower elevation as looking North gives you a feeling for the treatment architecturally of this bridge. Again, there is a real opportunity here to upgrade the overall image of the bridge, to give it more of a historic look, an architectural look really building on the architecture of the City, the Millyard, the Amoskeag...we felt there were a number of cues that we could take from that area and you will see that reflected in lighting and the architectural railing and so forth that is being developed. The next slide shows in detail how we are looking at approaching the design of the bridge and the upper two elevations show the interior portion of the bridge, that is as you are driving across the bridge we have a pre-cast concrete system with these recessed panels that pick up on the historic feeling of the Millyard and the downtown and then you can see we have accent piers and lighting, which shows up in the lower elevations which both reflect how the bridge would be viewed from a distance looking at the exterior elevation. You can see there is a concrete skirt that has more dimension to it that basically floats in front of the steel girders but gives this historic flavor and character. We think there is also opportunities to do special treatments. For example you can see in the end there where there is the idea of some kind of a logo or picking up on some things that can be done as part of this. We are looking at even putting the name there and so forth so that this has some real character. The next image again shows the planned view that we have just been talking about. This shows the view basically approaching when you are on Granite Street coming underneath the Interstate. We have looked at the opportunity here...with the widening what is happening is you can see the photo on the left is what you have today and approaching the downtown we are going to have a much wider section and we have the ability on the two sides, similar to the Concord Interchange as some of you may have seen, to introduce some architectural treatments here. Again, this is an area you pass through that is highly visible. Of course we are also going to have some pedestrian activity through this area and we felt that there was an opportunity to reinforce this kind of architectural character here. You can see a series of arches that we designed for the lower elevation and the intent with those is, in fact, that they could be...they could function as panels for public art and there would be ways to do that with either sort of an embossed panel or there are different kinds of systems that could be applied and that could be handled through your local arts group here but the idea is really setting up that framework. Again, there is a big focus on lighting underneath this area. It is going to feel like daylight all the time. Of course it is much more open and higher but it will be very bright and then we can address the pedestrian paving and so forth so it is a very comfortable place.

Mr. Larochelle stated one thing that I keep getting reminded to put out there is that the Interstate bridge as you can see from the next slide after we look at it passes over Granite Street so Granite Street is on the lower level and the Interstate is on the upper level so when you look at this slide you can see the Interstate above and Granite Street passes below. One of the important things to note about this picture right here is this is how...as it is proposed is essentially how it is going to get built. What you see up here, what Hank was alluding to is that there is a possibility to add public art. The City could commission that something be done for that and the design is being taken forward in such a way that the public art could be hung at some future date but when the bridge is complete it is going to look like this.

Mr. Alinger stated this next cross section is basically looking again East between the bridge crossing and Commercial Street. It just gives you a feeling for the landscape character and the lighting and so forth. The area on the left of course is the transition over to Jillians' parking lot. There is a landscape section there with a retaining wall and planted lower level. That gets slightly reworked. You can see the numbers of lanes and so forth. The landscape median with the smaller scaled trees in the middle and then the larger scaled trees framing the overall gateway. You can then see lighting and the opportunity to introduce banners that could provide some color and interest and something that the City could take on that could be rotated out for special events and so forth. Again, we think these are all elements that really reinforce this gateway character.

Mr. Larochelle stated some of the important features on this particular slide are the Mill building here on the right hand side, which is on the Southern curb line of the road and then the retaining wall here, which separates and provides the vertical relief between Jillians' parking lot here and the upper part of the Granite Street roadway. So you can see the need for the retaining walls here.

Mr. Alinger stated the next slide shows again the continuity of the landscape and the lighting treatment and the sidewalk that runs consistently throughout this. We talked about these esplanades. We do have the sidewalks set back about 6' consistently and then we have a 6' walkway beyond that so again it is all designed to reinforce the comfort for the pedestrian so you are not walking just next to the curb line. In fact the walkway is somewhat set back. It makes it a little bit friendlier and introduces a little bit more green on the street. Again, the lighting is a consistent theme. You can see it is not literally the Amoskeag lights but it is really picking up on that family of lights that we have been using on the bridge and on the roadway so it is all very compatible in terms of the system.

Mr. Larochelle stated if you look at where the trees are located and how the roadway typical depicts what is going to happen with the landscaping and apply that to a plan this is essentially what we are looking at. This is Hank's version of softening up the roadway plan and taking all of that yellow color that we have and making it something that looks inviting in a gateway fashion when you enter the City.

Mr. Alinger replied again you have seen this image but you can start to see the continuity again for all of the parking lots that are being addressed we are introducing new landscape in the parking lots. We are introducing some hedges around the outside of those so that you are basically screening the parts from the street and getting in shade trees where they are needed. Again it is very simple kind of treatments but we think if you start to treat that consistently in this corridor it is going to add up and really make a difference in terms of the way it feels. Continuing to the East you can see where in some places like the Gateway Park in certain cases where we have a little bit more room we are looking at getting in a double row of trees, for example, and then whenever we have the width introduce trees in the median. So, again we are trying to make this a very positive image. This can be the new postcard and the gateway or entrance to the City. A similar treatment carrying all the way through to Elm Street and on to Lake Avenue, which is pretty much on the South side adjacent to the civic center...again just getting the continuity of the landscape and sidewalks through the whole corridor. We have done a couple of sketches and these were actually done very early on in the process so they don't literally reflect the final design but we thought it was still useful to include them just to give you a feel for the impact of the landscape improvements, lighting and so forth. Again, these don't literally affect the actual paving or lighting but they are really sort of getting at the spirit of the design. You can see in the next shot again in a similar fashion it gives you a feeling for street trees and flowering trees and just the effect of lighting and green and the overall landscape approach.

Mr. Larochelle stated there has been a tremendous amount of environmental coordination done on this project to be able to support the needs for Federal funding, to be able to secure the Federal funding. The project has been processed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. I am going to kind of read some of this off because there is a lot of text here and a lot of information that I need to get out. Coordination has taken place with State and Federal agencies, town officials and other groups. The environmental document was completed that addresses the impacts associated with the project, specifically approximately two acres of right-of-way and one full commercial business are proposed to be acquired. These acquisitions are not anticipated to cause any significant changes in land use or the tax base. The property that is going to be acquired in full is the M&H Mart, the former Cumberland Farms, at 297 Granite Street. Temporary and permanent alterations will be made to two of the parks within the corridor that used U.S. Department of Interior Land and Water Conservation funds. Those are Loeb Plaza and Gateway Park. Loeb Plaza will require approximately .12 acres of temporary impacts to the property. For the Gateway Park there will be approximately .07 acres of temporary impact. The Department of Resources and Economic Development have determined that proposed construction activities will help to enhance the recreational uses at the facilities primarily because of the inclusion of sidewalks and the potential for bicycle activity in the area on the shoulders. The proposed project will permanently impact approximately .1 acres of wetlands, 110' of riverbank and 55' of channel. Impacts will be associated with the extension of Granite Street Bridge piers

and abutments within the Merrimack River. Strict erosion control measures will be utilized during construction to protect the integrity of the Merrimack River. The project was reviewed by the Natural Resources Agency, NH Wetland Bureau, NH Fish & Game Department, NH DES, Shoreland Protection Program, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, National Marine Fishery Service, U.S. Coast Guard, and the Federal Highway Administration. NH Fish & Game Department has mandated that due to shad and herring sensitivity to noise and the fact that this section of the Merrimack is within their migration pattern pile driving and the construction of copper dams shall occur from late October to December. These agencies presently have no objections with the proposed action. The project will be located within the floodway of the Merrimack River. The NH Office of Emergency Management has determined that the project does not have the potential to affect flood levels. Nothing in the proposed work will jeopardize the community status in the National Flood Insurance Program. In coordination with the NH Division of Historical Resources and FHWA, Federal Highway, the project was investigated for historical and cultural resources. Four properties within the project were identified as either historic or potentially historic. These are: Manchester Mill #7 located at 50 Philippe Cote Court, Mill #10 at 55 Commercial Street, the dwelling at 298 Granite Street and the former Granite Square Theatre at 290 Granite Street. No substantial archeological resources were identified within the immediate footprint of the proposed project. A professional archeological monitor will be required to be on-site during construction within specific areas. Ground water on the Western side of the Merrimack River has a heavy concentration of MTBE, a gas additive. NH DES files and a current ground water monitoring program indicate that the Exxon station located on the Northeast quadrant of the Granite Street/South Main Street intersection is the probable source of this MTBE. Also a chlorinated source appears to be located at the Exxon station. As work for the project is located downgrading from likely contaminated sites the potential exists for possible contamination along the project corridor. Minor inconveniences to motorists and pedestrians will occur as part of the project so delays should be anticipated during construction. It is expected, however, that existing traffic patterns will be maintained in effect through the construction. Access to all properties and businesses will be maintained at all times. Heavy equipment operations will result in temporary increase to noise and dust levels during construction. Such increases will be minimized to the extent practicable and the environmental document will be available after the hearing to anyone who wishes to review it. Now we will talk a little bit about the right-of-way process. This is really where we are going to be heading next assuming that we have a successful hearing tonight. The properties that will be affected will have appraisals done based on fair market value. Those appraisals will be viewed by an independent party to make sure that they are appropriate. Each affected abutter will be contacted to talk about the impacts to the properties. Negotiations will be conducted and an offer will be made at some point thereafter. If the offer is accepted by the individuals, documents will be developed by the City and recorded by the City. If the offer is not accepted, there is recourse through the NH Board of Tax and Land Appeals. It is important to note that no attorney...if there is an issue here no attorney is needed to take it through this process. We also note that relocation

assistance is available if applicable and appointments will be made in the coming months as we go through that process. Current project schedule. We are looking to complete the design in December 2003 and hope to have right-of-way acquisitions completed by the spring of 2004 and advertise for bids in the summer of 2004. This is going to be primarily consistent with the State's Exit 5 project and the intent here is to have both of them go to construction at the same time so that we don't have the whole area ripped up for a number of years. It will also help to hopefully minimize costs by having it all done at one time. Construction is to begin the summer of 2004 and be completed by the summer or fall of 2007. Project cost. The design is \$1.5 million and that includes all of the sub-consultants and everything that is being used to take it through the final design process. Right-of-way acquisitions are anticipated at \$4.5 million. Construction of the roadway and bridge is \$12.5 to \$14.5 million. Construction of the railroad crossing is \$620,000. Total range is from \$19 to \$21 million. Now Tom is going to come up and talk a little bit about project funding and where the project stands or where the funding for the project stands at this point.

Mr. Sommers stated presently we are looking for Federal funding, earmarked funding, in the range of \$15 to \$16 million. As many of you are aware, Senator Gregg did make an announcement this last summer with respect to the first \$8 million. My understanding and we are waiting for word is that that is moving forward and then we will begin the process for the second \$7 to \$8 million. We are also aware and looking for special enhancement funding in the vicinity of about \$300,000. Railroad funding could be in the vicinity of \$620,000 and then the City of Manchester allocation, depending on Federal funding, would be in the \$3 to \$4 million range. This includes obviously all of the aspects, the design, etc. The City has already put up a fair amount of their allocation. With that we come to the close of our presentation. I will note that there are, as we go into the next part there are comment cards, which people can use to make written comments. Those can be directed to Dennis Anctil at the City Highway Department and those ought to be returned within 10 days. They will be answered individually and they will be part of the record. With that, we turn it back over to you, Mayor.

Mayor Baines called for those wishing to comment.

Chris King, Manchester NH stated:

I am Vice President of the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce and I want to thank you for this opportunity to speak to you tonight. Very briefly as you may know we have been strong supporters of this project in the past year and a half or so and as you also may know the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce, its Board of Directors and members have initiated this project as the number one priority of the Chamber. In the past we have worked closely with the City and with Senator Gregg's Office to secure the initial \$8 million in funding and we look forward to doing whatever we can to secure the second phase of the funding. As you know as well this project will have a huge economic impact on the City. It will have an impact on our businesses, the residents and the overall economic vitality of the

City of Manchester. As we move forward the Chamber of Commerce stands ready to support this project in any way possible. We thank Senator Gregg for his efforts and commitment to this project and we congratulate you, the City, for your work in making this infrastructure project possible.

Alderman Lopez stated just as a question in reference to the \$12.5 million for the construction of the roadway and the advertising for bids in the summer of 2004, I realize everybody is trying to get the money but is there a contingency plan if the money doesn't come until 2005.

Mr. Sommers replied it is my understanding that if there is some delay that working with the NH DOT that they could delay or work in the delay with their project for about a year or so. There is some flexibility there although I don't know that there is tremendous flexibility but I am sure that would be worked out. It is important that these two projects go reasonably simultaneously but I do understand that that is possible.

Alderman Lopez asked for the green space and all of that what is the total cost of the maintenance for that particular area once completed.

Mr. Sommers answered to be very honest with you I don't have an answer to that. Yes, there will be maintenance.

Mayor Baines stated that is a good question. I just want to comment because when we first came in with this project the concern we had and I am glad you mentioned the Bridge Street Interchange because I know I have had many conversations with Mr. MacKenzie about that and wished that it had been a different design and I am very excited about the landscape architecture that is going to be a part of this project. As you look around the City I wish that the detail of our landscape architecture had been paid a lot more attention to. I often look at South Willow Street and I always compare it to International Drive down in Florida. Every time I have been down there with my kids I go out for a drive and I say I wish someone had had the vision of South Willow Street with that kind of landscape architecture. That is going to be a very important part of this project to create a gateway to the City. We are pretty much committed to making that a reality in this design.

Alderman Forest asked in reference to the railroad crossing that you were talking about upgrading, the four lanes that are there now can be a disaster around 3 PM and now you are talking seven lanes that are going to be going there and the trains going by and stopping seven lanes. How is that going to work?

Mr. Larochelle answered the design is...it will be integrated in with the signal systems so that all of the timings will be coordinated for a train crossing. Obviously when the train comes by there are going to be delays. The plan of this project is to accommodate that as

best we can within the area that we have but when a train comes by...you know how it is. You drive through that area. All traffic stops. What we can do as designers is to try to minimize that and work it into the project as best we can. The project will include the reconstruction of that intersection to include new safety equipment, preemption equipment and early detection systems for the train such that we can work all of that new technology in coordination with the traffic signal systems to make it work as best as possible with the constraints that we have.

Alderman Smith stated since this impacts most of my ward I was wondering is the bridge going to be completely closed or will there be detours.

Mr. Larochelle replied the bridge will remain open and the traffic will be maintained on its current patterns as it is now.

Alderman Smith stated the only reason I am saying that is on Exit 4 we have a heck of a situation. As you may know if you are traveling North on Second Street there is I-293 and the right hand land and everybody gets in that lane. It is also the lane that people use for the Verizon Center. As you know, it backs up onto the I-293 ramp as it is right now. We have a big problem at Exit 4. I am sure Frank Thomas will tell you that.

Mr. Sommers responded just as a comment in addition to what Roch just said, the intent in terms of the construction is that we construct the new portion, the three lanes, first and keep the other lanes as they exist open for as long as possible. Obviously when we go to match everything there will be times when there will be delays, etc. but the intent is to have basically full access as you presently have it now. Obviously the Northbound and the Southbound connections, the new connections, won't be there until the end but you will at least have access as you have it now for the most part during the construction process.

Alderman Smith asked so are you going to assure me that most of the time the bridge will be open for traffic East and West.

Mr. Sommers answered correct.

Mr. Larochelle stated four lanes will be maintained and the widening will occur to the North first.

Alderman Gatsas asked can you tell me how many properties are going to be in the taking or partial taking of the right-of-way.

Mr. Larochelle answered I can't tell you the exact number. There are...basically many of the properties that line the Northern curb line are going to have acquisitions involved. We

have spoken to just about all of those abutters where acquisitions will be required and we have coordinated with those individuals. I think there might be six or eight where there are actual acquisitions required.

Mr. Sommers stated just to add to that I think there are two properties over on the West Side that as far as the Granite Street project is concerned one is going to be a full acquisition which is M&H Mart and the other one is a partial acquisition, which is the Exxon station. The other project that you might be thinking of is the Exit 5 project, which is the Raphael Club and Henry's Auto Body and those are being negotiated separately through the NH DOT. Going to the East, the properties that we are talking about...two of them are public parks and we have already worked those out with the resource and environmental agencies because they did have Federal funding involved in them in terms of those takings if you will of those properties. Are there any other ones, Roch? There were some other small ones, which we have been working out with those people. Fleet Bank is another one. We have a partial taking. That one we already worked out the site plan that you looked at with them to their satisfaction. I think I hit most of them.

Alderman Gatsas responded my follow-up or statement to that is the sensitivity to the eminent domain procedures for people who are impacted by that so that they have a very clear understanding of what that eminent domain procedure is so that whatever rights they have they are given those rights in a timely fashion and with some sort of courtesy and understanding about the process.

Mr. Sommers stated all of those people have been contacted at this point. I believe that we had not only written contact but also verbal discussions with them so that process is underway. We have an attorney on board. We have an appraisal. They know their rights and they are being informed of their rights. In fact, part of the process here is to make sure that we state it in a formal way so they absolutely follow what you just...they get the courtesy that you just requested.

Alderman Osborne asked could you tell me how much that affects the tax base as far as the eminent domain and the right-of-way and so on and so forth.

Mr. Larochelle answered I think the environmental document addresses that. There is no exact number at this time.

Alderman Osborne stated I am just curious that's all.

There being no one else presenting wishing to speak, on motion of Alderman Forest, duly seconded by Alderman Smith, it was voted to take all comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written documentation presented.

This being a special meeting of the Board, no further business was presented on motion of Alderman Garrity, duly seconded by Alderman Lopez it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk